

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008—S. CON. RES. 21; FURTHER REVISIONS TO THE CONFERENCE AGREEMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 309 DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR COUNTY PAYMENTS LEGISLATION

(in billions of dollars)

Current Allocation to Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee:	
FY 2007 Budget Authority	5,016
FY 2007 Outlays	5,484
FY 2008 Budget Authority	5,636
FY 2008 Outlays	5,322
FY 2008–2012 Budget Authority	29,583
FY 2008–2012 Outlays	28,475
Adjustments:	
FY 2007 Budget Authority	0
FY 2007 Outlays	0
FY 2008 Budget Authority	–565
FY 2008 Outlays	–565
FY 2008–2012 Budget Authority	–3,745
FY 2008–2012 Outlays	–3,745
Revised Allocation to Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee:	
FY 2007 Budget Authority	5,016
FY 2007 Outlays	5,484
FY 2008 Budget Authority	5,071
FY 2008 Outlays	4,757
FY 2008–2012 Budget Authority	25,838
FY 2008–2012 Outlays	24,730

REMEMBERING SENATOR CRAIG THOMAS

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, all of us in the Senate will miss Craig Thomas. I got to know Craig when we both served on the Senate Ethics Committee. During that time, I came to admire him as a wonderful human being, a man of character and integrity, and someone who spoke plainly on how he felt about things.

I also admired Craig for speaking up in policy lunch and at the steering committee on so many occasions. He always got to the nub of the problem and never failed to tell it just as he saw it. On many occasions, I sensed he had a great frustration with the system, but he stayed in there and was an encouragement to many.

When he got sick, Janet and I put him on our prayer list. I also looked at some health care alternatives for him in Cleveland, but he felt he had great care at the Bethesda Naval Hospital. The last time I saw him, he looked like the old Craig, full of vim and vigor. We were shocked when we heard of his passing. It is said that it is not the number of years one lives that counts but what one does with those years that matters. We will all miss Craig but know that he is in heaven with our father eternally happy.

POSITIVE ENERGY DIRECTION

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, last week this body passed energy legislation that finally sets the U.S. energy policy in a new, positive direction. In 2005, I opposed the Energy bill because it did not establish a sound and fiscally responsible energy policy. The Renewable Fuels, Consumer Protection, and Energy Efficiency Act of 2007 will help wean the United States of oil dependence, encourage the development of renewable energy, and promote energy efficiency, and I was pleased to support it.

The bill includes many important provisions. A renewable fuel standard of 36 billion gallons of renewable fuel by 2022 will help spur the development of advanced fuels such as cellulosic ethanol, which holds a lot of promise for my home State of Wisconsin. The bill also includes anti-price gouging language, based on Senator CANTWELL's bill that I cosponsored, to protect consumers from price gouging by sellers and distributors of oil, gasoline, or petroleum distillates during natural disasters and abnormal market disruptions.

The bill also includes a proposal of mine that supports local renewable energy—an issue I am committed to advancing and hear a lot about during the listening sessions I annually hold in every county of Wisconsin. My amendment, cosponsored by Senators SANDERS and MENENDEZ, guarantees that a new energy and environmental block grant program would provide resources to cities and counties nationwide to reduce fossil fuel emissions, reduce energy use, and improve energy efficiency while ensuring these improvements do not harm the environment and retain the benefits of activities within the local community, such as encouraging local or cooperative ownership of bioenergy efforts.

Our Nation's addiction to oil poses a significant threat to our economy, our security, and our environment. The Federal Government should allow and encourage State and local governments to improve their energy policies while creating opportunities for rural Americans to produce and benefit from renewable energy. My amendment is based on my larger effort to increase opportunities for rural America outlined in my Rural Opportunities Act. Introduced in February 2007, the Rural Opportunities Act helps sustain and strengthen rural economies for the future and create more opportunities in rural communities. A crucial component of the bill is ensuring that the potential benefits from domestic renewable energy are gained in an environmentally responsible manner that benefits local communities.

During debate on this important bill, I also supported several efforts to improve it. I was pleased to cosponsor several successful amendments including one offered by the senior Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. KOHL, to make oil-producing and exporting cartels illegal, and make colluding oil-producing nations liable in U.S. court for violations of antitrust law. I also cosponsored the amendment from the Senator from Colorado, Mr. SALAZAR, that states the sense of Congress that America's agricultural, forestry, and working lands should provide 25 percent of the total energy consumed in the United States from renewable sources by the year 2025 while continuing to produce safe, abundant, and affordable food, feed, and fiber.

I supported an amendment offered by the Senator from Indiana, Mr. BAYH,

that sets aggressive targets for reducing oil consumption by 10,000 billion barrels a day by 2030. The language is simple—it sets our goal, and we have to figure out how to get there. We are a country of innovators. Whether it is wind, solar, biodiesel, or a technology we still have not dreamed of yet, we can—and we must—break our addiction to oil. This bold, aggressive amendment can help ensure that we meet our goal of real energy independence and security.

Any plan to move away from our dependence on oil needs to address fuel efficiency standards for our vehicles. In the last few years, I have joined a majority of my Senate colleagues in supporting legislation requiring the administration to increase fuel efficiency, but we have so far been unsuccessful in getting this requirement enacted. I supported a proposal from several of my colleagues, including Senators PRYOR and LEVIN, that was crafted to increase fuel efficiency standards substantially without jeopardizing the jobs of many hard-working Wisconsinites. It is unfortunate this amendment was never offered. I will be following the House and Senate conference closely to ensure that the final bill strikes the right balance on this issue.

I am also disappointed that the Senate was unable to muster the necessary votes to overcome Republican objections to a tax package reported by the Finance Committee that would boost energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. The cost of these new or extended tax incentives was fully offset. It is also unfortunate that the Senate could not once again pass a renewable portfolio standard to ensure that all States' utilities are producing a minimum percentage of renewable energy. My home State of Wisconsin is one of about 20 States that currently have such a standard, but a Federal standard would help level the playing field.

It is encouraging, however, that the Senate soundly rejected proposals to mandate the use of and direct Federal money to develop coal-to-liquid facilities. Private investors have not been willing to invest in this technology in the United States because of significant capital costs and risks, not to mention the unproven technology to capture and store greenhouse gas emissions.

Energy security is an important issue for America and one which my Wisconsin constituents take very seriously. I am pleased this bill rejects the efforts of some of my colleagues to insist on drilling for oil and gas in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge would sacrifice one of America's greatest natural treasures for a supply of oil that would not significantly enhance our energy security. The supply of oil in the Arctic Refuge may not last more than a year, would not be available for many years to come, and would decrease gas prices by only a penny when the Refuge is at its highest